

*Find* discharging an impurity gas produced when refining the crystal precursor material by adding a scavenger thereto.

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REMARKS

Claims 45-47, 49-53 and 55-59 are pending. Claims 55-59 have been amended to make Applicant's invention more clear. Claims 45 and 59 are in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that Claim 59 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Since Claim 59 has been so rewritten, it is believed clearly in condition for allowance.

Claims 54-58, 59 and 60 were rejected under Section 112, first paragraph. Cancellation of Claim 54 and the rewriting of allowable Claim 59 as an independent claim renders this rejection moot. Note that independent Claim 59 claims a plurality of stages.

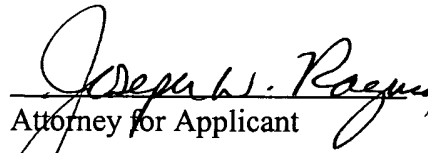
The objection to Claim 60 on the basis of antecedent basis is rendered moot by its cancellation.

The rejection under Section 103 of Claims 60 and 61 is moot in view of the cancellation of those claims.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, this application is believed clearly to be in condition for allowance and early passage to issue is respectfully requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO CLAIMS

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54. (Cancelled)

55. (Amended) A production apparatus according to Claim [54] 59, wherein said crucible has formed therein at least two degassing holes in the side wall portion thereof.

56. (Amended) A production apparatus according to Claim [54] 59, wherein said crucible has a cylindrical shape.

57. (Amended) A production apparatus according to Claim [54] 59, wherein said crucible has an inner diameter of at least 250 mm.

58. (Amended) A production apparatus according to Claim [54] 59, wherein said degassing hole has a diameter of 1 to 5 mm.

59. (Amended) A production apparatus [according to Claim 54] for producing a crystal, said apparatus comprising:

a crucible containing a crystal precursor material; and

a heater arranged to heat said crucible,

wherein said crucible has formed therein a degassing hole in a side wall portion thereof for discharging an impurity gas produced when refining the crystal precursor material by adding a scavenger thereto, and

wherein a fluoride crystal is formed from the crystal precursor material,

[wherein] said crucible [is] being divided into a plurality of stages and each stage of said plurality of stages of said crucible [has] having formed therein a degassing hole in a side wall portion thereof for discharging an impurity gas produced when refining the crystal precursor material by adding a scavenger thereto.

60. (Cancelled)

61. (Cancelled)

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